

Nutrition in Sports

Dr Jayeshkumar D. Mungara*

Introduction

Good nutrition is important, especially among professional athletes. Any type of sports put immense stress on the body. The demands of any physical activity cannot be met without ramping up your diet. In a day, an average person has to consume 2000 to 5000 calories, depending on the gender and level of activities. An athlete requires more calories per day to achieve optimal health and performance. Simply put, the nutrition needs of an athlete are different from an average person. In today's post, we are outlining the impact of nutrition in sports.

Performance

Ever wonder why you feel exhausted, fatigued, and irritable when you're hungry? When the body is not getting the nutrients it needs to keep up with your physical demands, the energy level goes down. The same thing goes for athletes who are not sticking to a healthy diet.

The body of an athlete needs sufficient carbohydrates to prevent muscle fatigue and stabilize blood sugar and glycogen levels in the muscles. Beneficial fats are converted into fuel, energizing the body and improving endurance. Protein is needed to build new muscle tissues and boost energy. Depriving your body of balanced meals when you are an athlete will affect your performance.

Weight

Proper nutrition coupled with a fit, healthy lifestyle is the best way to control weight. Proper weight is critical for athletes. Excess weight could slow the body

* Assit. Professor In Physical Education, Shree Somnath Sanskrit University, Veraval

down, affect endurance, and cause a variety of health problems. It is important for athletes to maintain a normal weight to achieve optimum health and performance.

According to the American College of Sports Medicine, the best types of foods for athletes are green, leafy, and high-fiber vegetables, fruits, legumes, and whole grains. Choosing lean protein and low-fat dairy also contribute to a healthy weight. If you are an athlete and you want to keep your weight in check, we recommend working with a licensed dietician. A dietician will develop the right meal plan customized according to your needs.

Hydration

Staying hydrated is critical for athletes. The body loses vital fluids through perspiration and breathing. If the body is not getting enough fluids, the muscles start to weaken. You are increasing your risk of dehydration if you do not drink up. Water lubricates the muscles and helps cells transport nutrients throughout the body. So drink up especially if you are engaged in an intense? Drink more if you are training regularly.

Recovery

The nutrients from the food you eat help heal the body from the usual strains that come with training. When you are eating right, the body bounces back to its old self more quickly. How? Essential vitamins and minerals promote cell repair, cell regeneration and healing.

Carbohydrates and protein aid in muscle growth and repair. After training, you want to replace the carbohydrates you lost to ensure speedy muscle recovery. That said, the portion of carbs and protein must be balanced and adjusted depending on the intensity and type of sport. Again, we recommend working with a licensed dietician to develop a customized meal plan for you.

Importance of Nutrition in Endurance Sports

Firstly, by a "recovery meal" we mean food eaten within approximately 30 minutes of finishing a training session or race, which is vitally important for replenishing your muscular energy reserves, preventing injuries and helping

training adaptation. A recovery meal should contain both carbohydrates and proteins.

Secondly, a recovery meal will have no impact on your weight provided it is eaten within the 30- minute window after finishing your training session. This is because it merely balances out the number of calories you have consumed during such prolonged exertion. So, what should you eat?

- Your carbohydrates should be fast-absorbing sugars found in foods with a moderate-high glycemic index (white rice crackers, white rice or white bread, marmalade, fruit and sugars);
- High-quality proteins ensure muscle repair and adaptation: it only takes 10 g of protein to stimulate protein synthesis, but the best effect comes from 20 g of protein: the ideal strategy is to organize your training sessions so that you can eat your main meal afterwards to take in the ideal quantities.

Thirdly, your post-exercise/race meal helps reduce muscular inflammation and aids recovery ready for your next training sessions. As has already been pointed out, a meal containing a balanced amount of carbohydrates and proteins or a ready- repaired recovery drink can keep down any rise in cortisol levels (that causes muscular inflammation), so that your muscles recover better.

Here are some tips to maintain your routine schedule for the diet:

- a. **Make your recovery meal part of your routine.** Make sure you eat a balanced recovery meal or, alternatively, a ready-prepared recovery drink immediately after training or racing.
- b. **Do not underestimate the benefits of a recovery meal.** You are almost certainly not a professional athlete, who can afford to rest for hours after intensive training, so you must learn how to manage your energy resources and your body as effectively as possible. A simple meal can be the difference between an excellent or terrible training session the day after a tough workout.

- c. **Rehydration is another aspect of recovery you cannot afford to overlook:** on average, you need to drink approximately 125-150% of the amount of fluids lost during training, which means that if you lose 1 kg in weight you need to drink approximately 1.25-1.5 L of fluids over the next few hours after training.
- d. **Avoid do-it-yourself solutions.** You can buy a ready-made drink that is true: you have read what to eat and how to resist, all well and good. But unless you are a nutritionist, you will not know how your body responds to certain stimuli and you will not know how many calories you consume after certain types of training. So before starting your endurance program, talk to a nutritionist about your goals and, with your training plan at hand, together you can devise a nutritional programme tailor-made for your specific requirements.

Reference

- Recipe Nutrition – extends USDA database with friendly names for common ingredients, recipe nutrition calculator and additional specialized ingredients
- German Nutrition Data with the fast search on www.lexolino.de
- USDA National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference Search By Food
- USDA National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference Nutrient Lists Search By Nutrient